

authors of *Glass Manufacturing in Canada* have bravely responded with honest comments:

Despite documentary evidence that pressed glass was made in Canada, little is known about which specific patterns were produced. (p.24)

Glass manufactured in Canada... formed part of a larger North American industry. In the area of pressed glass in particular, the lack of uniquely Canadian characteristics in either style or technique has made its identification difficult. (p.1)

For those who have invested a lot of money in Canadian pressed glass, the strongest comment is the hardest to swallow: "From a stylistic point of view, there is no Canadian pressed glass" (p.24).

Rottenberg and Tomlin soften this, adding:

The very proliferation of pressed glass, whether Canadian, American or English, on the nineteenth-century Canadian market, makes it all the more essential that examples be included in a Canadian historical collection. Their origins may be questionable, but their existence in Canadian homes is not. (p. 24)

Unfortunately, this is not supported by any evidence that the glass in the History Division collection was acquired to document its use in Canadian homes. The feeling is rather that this collection, as others, was amassed for its presumed "Canadian-ness."

The dichotomy here is that, while rejecting the belief that Canadian glass is unique, this publication surveys those patterns which have been labelled "Canadian," politely indicating by the white spaces on the pages what minimal information exists on these pieces.

In the *Maine Antiques Digest* for December 1982, Hyla Wulfs Fox, in a provocative article on Canadian glass, raised the collector question: "Why hasn't something been published or written [presumably by museums]...to stop the perpetuation of misinformation that has appeared in print over so many years (since 1955) by so many people."⁴ Unfortunately for Hyla Wulfs Fox, *Glass Manufacturing in Canada* will not receive the mass distribution of such collector bait as *Glass in Canada*, the most recent perpetrator of misinformation.⁵ Although *Glass Manufacturing in Canada* appears to have been produced with the intention of informing the collecting public, that public, the intended audience, will probably never see it. This is regrettable for such an honest and forthright presentation on the state of glass studies in Canada belongs in every collector's library.

NOTES

1. Of the 21 accepted Nova Scotia pressed glass patterns, Rose Branches, Tassel and Crest, and Trenton Block are not included here.

2. Janet Holmes and Olive Jones, "Glass in Canada: An Annotated Bibliography," *Material History Bulletin* 6 (Autumn 1978): 117.
3. 1974 ICOM (International Council of Museums) definition: A museum is a non-profitmaking, permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates, and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of man and his environment.
4. Hyla Wulfs Fox, "Canadian Glass," *Maine Antiques Digest* 10, no.12 (December 1982): 26B-28B.
5. Gerald Stevens, *Glass in Canada: The First One Hundred Years*, ed. Ralph Hedlin and Heidi Redkop (Agincourt, Ont: Methuen, 1982). For a critical look at this publication, see reviews by Major R.A. Harvey Snyder and Hyla Wulfs Fox, notably the *Glasfax Newsletter* 15 (February 1982) and *Toronto Star*, 7 October 1982, respectively.

Deborah Trask

Canadians and their Environment

Ruddel, David T. *Canadians and their Environment*. National Museum of Man Mercury Series/Musée national de l'Homme, Collection Mercure, ISSN 0316-1854; History Division Paper/Division de l'histoire, Dossier, no.35, ISSN 0316-1900. Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1982. iv, 113pp., ill. Free/gratuit.

The National Museum of Man's latest addition to its History Division Mercury Series examines the ways Canadians have coped with their environment. The book covers a wide range of Canadian history but concentrates on our frontiers. Men and women are portrayed not only labouring on the agricultural settlement frontier, but also on the fur, lumbering, mining, and urban frontiers. The author directed his study to emphasize "the detrimental impact on the environment and human health" of resource exploitation, the effects of which are to be seen in many of the illustrations used.

Based upon one of five thematic areas in the National Museum of Man's history exhibit, "A Few Acres of Snow," the book is most successful as an exhibit guide and supplement. The format of short text summaries combined with numerous illustrations and their captions does not lend itself to startling conclusions nor the in-depth synthesis of more formal Canadian histories, but it does allow an entertaining story to unfold for the non-professional reader. The short texts are well written and the many illustrations bring Canada's past to life. The bibliography, divided by subjects, is particularly useful; the individual is able to follow up his or her own area of interest. In addition, some of the illustration captions include a reference, an excellent means of encouraging someone to delve deeper into a specially inter-

esting or important aspect. Ruddel has captured the flavour of Canada both in the text and illustrations.

Canadians and their Environment depends largely upon illustrations and captions to tell its story and therefore it is upon the quality of these illustrations the book must stand. Unfortunately it is here that several problems are apparent. The selection of the illustrations seems uneven at times; for instance, in the lumbering section there are four photographs of logging trucks operating in British Columbia but only two of steam engines, neither of which is representative of the era and one of which is incorrectly labeled (p. 68). The caption of the six animals on p. 22 provides only the names of five. In other instances the photograph citation has been missed (pp. 16 and 78, for example). In the photograph (p. 76) of the museum diorama of a mine cart at Glace Bay, N.S., we need to know that the cart is a replica, but I would sooner know why this mine was recreated than that the walls were made with a rubber mould. Finally, as aesthetically pleasing as the bird's-eye view of Los Angeles may be, it is difficult to understand why it is included in a book on *Canadians and their Environment*.

One technique used in this book that the reviewer found especially interesting was the interweaving of photographs of artifacts with other illustrations. The placement of the shipwright's tools with the historic photograph of the shipwright's shed makes effective use of this technique (pp. 46, 47). Again an illustration of rail tongs was placed beside a photograph of men laying railroad tracks (p. 41). In other cases, however, the purpose of the photograph is not clear. Does the photograph of the "reconstituted" tin shop (p. 30) relate to the illustration of the village of Château-Richer in 1787? Why is the view of the Quebec City jail adjacent to the interior scene of a pulp mill? There are many photographs that show tools and equipment but relatively few of artifacts. Photographs of artifacts could have been used more extensively. The lumbering section, for instance, a major section of the book, contains only three photographs of artifacts despite the abundant remains of this industry. It is an intriguing book to read, however, and I hope that it will prove an inspiration for additional use of the combination of photographs of artifacts with historic photographs.

Robert Griffin

Material Culture Studies in America

Schlereth, Thomas J. *Material Culture Studies in America*. (Nashville, Tenn.: American Association for State and Local History, 1982.) xvi, 419pp., ill. Hardbound \$22.95, ISBN 0-910050-61-9; paper \$15.00, ISBN 0-910050-67-8.

Every so often, when analysing the mass of detail that must be collected in order to study some aspect of research on material culture, it is important to sit back and take stock. Tom Schlereth's book produces this effect. It provides not only an assessment of the development of material culture studies in the United States, but also an almost Shakespearian vision of the mental development of any material culture researcher who works honestly and in a sustained way on his subject, through collection and description, analysis and interpretation, and the adoption, rejection, or adaptation of functionalist, structuralist, and any other form of preferred approach.

The book is a collection of articles divided into statements of theory, method and practice, with a substantial bibliographical section. It is introduced by Schlereth's essay on the history of material culture studies in America from 1876 to 1976. All the extracts are from American sources. Though reference is made in the text and in the notes to European specialists and to their general influence on individuals in America, this is nevertheless an all-American book. Should we then say the book is useful to American researchers only?

Before answering this question, let us look more closely at the contents. It is a book intended for teaching purposes. Clearly there is a considerable teaching requirement in the U.S.; the study of material culture (defined as "the study through artifacts [and other pertinent historical evidence] of the belief systems—the values, ideas, attitudes and assumptions—of a particular community or society, usually across time") is well on the way to finding its feet as a discipline. It has a substantial basis in museum collections, studies of vernacular buildings and technology, folk art and "Americana," field research and archives, with government involvement from the 1930s (Index of American Design, Historic Sites Survey of the National Park Service, Historic American Building Survey, etc). It has, according to Schlereth, its demonstrable stages of development with the age of description from 1948 to 1965 and of interpretation from 1965 onwards. Four generations of scholars have worked on trends which are usefully summarized and defined in tables as art history, symbolist and cultural history, using approaches which can be environmentalist, functionalist, structuralist, behaviouralistic, or relating to national character or social history. The latter provides a particularly strong source of stimulation in current work, with European influence being exerted through the writings of British labour historians such as E.J. Holsbaum and E.P. Thompson, and of French historians such as Marc Bloch, Fernand Braudel, and Philippe Ariès.

Each of the abstracts has a brief introduction in which the main tenor of the argument and its context are indicated. Under "statements of theory," six authors consider questions of words versus things, which taken together make a strong plea for the proper use of artifacts as three-